

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00  
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R 101720Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9654  
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL LYON  
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE  
AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 04243

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, FR  
SUBJECT: PARIS MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND THE LEFT

SUMMARY: SOME OF THE LEFT'S PRINCIPAL SUPPORTERS IN  
PARIS BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED LEFT HAS MANAGED TO SNATCH  
DEFEAT FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY. WHILE THIS VIEW NE-  
GLECTS THE HISTORICAL REALITIES OF THE PREVIOUS PARIS  
MUNICIPALS, IT IS BASED ON

- THE BELIEF THAT THE PS CANDIDACY, UNILATERALLY  
DECLARED BY CERES HEAD GEORGES SARRE, WILL  
RECEIVE SUPPORT NEITHER FROM THE MAJORITY OF  
THE PS NOR FROM THE PCF;
- THE PCF'S STATED POSITION THAT IT WILL NOT  
RECOGNIZE THE SARRE CANDIDACY;
- THE ASSUMPTION THAT ONE WAY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE  
OF THE GOF MAJORITY'S INTERNECINE BATTLES.  
WOULD BE TO PRESENT A "PERSONALITY CANDIDATE"  
(ONE NOT PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE UNI-  
TED LEFT) RUNNING ON A UNION OF THE LEFT

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TICKET, WHO COULD BECOME AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNA-  
TIVE TO MANY CENTER AND MODERATE VOTERS (AS  
WELL AS TO CENTER AND MODERATE COUNCILMEN).  
WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE LEFT EVER HAD A CHANCE  
OF WINNING THE PARIS MAYORALTY, THE FACT THAT THERE IS  
PS AND PCF DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE CURRENT LACK OF UNION  
SUGGESTS AT LEAST THE PUBLIC DIMENSIONS OF THE CURRENT

PARIS SPLIT IN THE LEFT. PRIVATELY, NUMBERS OF PS LEADERS ARE NOT AT ALL UNHAPPY TO SEE THE CERES TAKE THE BRUNT OF AN EXPENSIVE AND LOSING CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

1. THE STAKES: THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THE LEFT BELIEVES IT CAN WIN THE PARIS MAYORALTY

ON THE BASIS OF THE POPULAR VOTE ALONE. INSTEAD, THERE ARE TWO SEPARATE ISSUES WHICH PREOCCUPY LEFT STRATEGISTS:

- WHICH PARTY WILL HAVE THE HONOR OF HEADING THE LISTS AND, THEREFORE, MAKE THE BEST SHOWING IN THE FIVE SECTORS CURRENTLY HELD BY THE LEFT (IN WHICH THE PCF HAS A MAJORITY OF THE VOTES), IN THE FOUR OTHER SECTORS IN WHICH THE LEFT BELIEVES IT HAS A FAIR CHANCE OF WINNING AND IN THE NINE OTHERS, WHERE LEFT CANDIDATES ARE NOT MUCH MORE THAN SACRIFICIAL LAMBS;
- WHICH PARTY CAN BE BEST PLACED TO ELECT ITS MAYORAL CANDIDATE IN THE EVENT THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS PRODUCE A DEAD-LOCK BETWEEN JACQUES CHIRAC AND MICHEL D'ORNANO.

2. THE PS CLAIMS TO LEADERSHIP -- SPECIOUS AND VALID: TRADITIONALLY IT IS THE PCF WHICH CONTROLS PARIS MUNICIPAL VOTING AND WHICH HAS RUN THE FIVE SECTORS OF THE CITY CONTROLLED BY THE LEFT (OF 18). IN 1971 THE PCF TOOK 20 OF THE 27 MUNICIPAL COUNCIL SEATS WHICH BELONG TO THE OPPOSITION; THE PS WON ONLY FIVE. SINCE THOSE

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ELECTIONS, HOWEVER, THE PS HAS REGISTERED HUGE GAINS IN POLLS AND IN BY-ELECTIONS (ALMOST NONE OF THEM IN PARIS). ARGUING THAT THIS PROGRESS ALONE ENTITLES IT TO CONTROL MANY OF PARIS' CHOICE (READ SURE FOR THE LEFT) CONSTITUENCIES, THE PS HAS BEEN MAKING HARD AND VOCIFEROUS CLAIMS TO LEADERSHIP IN A NUMBER OF SECTORS. THE PCF, WHICH CONSIDERS ITSELF TO BE HISTORICALLY ENTITLED TO THAT LEADERSHIP, HAS PROVEN TO BE A TOUGH OPPONENT AND HAS IN FACT SUCCEEDED IN GETTING BOTH SARRE AND PS NATIONAL INFORMATION SECRETARY CLAUDE ESTIER TO WITHDRAW THEIR CLAIMS TO BE AT THE HEAD OF THEIR RESPECTIVE SECTORAL LISTS.

3. THE SARRE CANDIDACY -- BUILT ON A FOUNDATION OF SAND: THE PS FEDERATION OF PARIS HAS BEEN CONTROLLED SINCE 1971 BY THE PARTY'S LEFT-WING CERES ORGANIZATION. CURRENTLY 60 PERCENT CERES AND 40 PERCENT MITTERRANDIST, THE PARIS FEDERATION HAS A LONG HISTORY OF EMBARRASSING THE PARTY MAJORITY. SEEMINGLY INFLUENCED BY THE NEED

TO HAVE NO OPPONENTS ON ITS LEFT, THE FEDERATION HAS,

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 04243

IN YEARS PAST, JUMPED THE GUN ON VAST NUMBERS OF PS  
DISCUSSIONS (BY LEAKING POSITION PAPERS TO THE PRESS;  
BY TALKING OUT OF SCHOOL ABOUT INTERNAL PROBLEMS, ETC.).  
THE SARRE CANDIDACY, FIRST RUMORED LAST JULY, IS YET  
ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THIS "CERES ACTIVISM FOR THE SAKE  
OF MOTION," AS ONE MAJORITY DEPUTY CALLED IT. AFTER  
YEARS OF COMPLAINING THAT THE FEDERATION OF PARIS HAS  
NEVER BEEN GIVEN ITS DUE BY THE NATIONAL LEADERS OF THE  
PS, THE CERES APPARENTLY DECIDED LAST SUMMER THAT IT  
WOULD PROPOSE ITS OWN CANDIDATE FOR THE PARIS MAYORALTY,  
REGARDLESS OF THE WISHES OF BOTH THE PS NATIONAL LEADER-  
SHIP AND, CURIOUSLY ENOUGH FOR A LEFT FACTION WITHIN THE  
PARTY, REGARDLESS OF THE WISHES OF THE PCF'S PARIS FEDE-  
RATION. SARRE, OF THE MAJOR CERES LEADERS, WAS CONSI-  
DERED TO BE THE ONE MAN WITH SUFFICIENT FREEDOM OF MO-  
TION (THE OTHER TOP THREE CERES LEADERS ARE EITHER  
"TAINTED" BY THEIR ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE MAJORITY OF  
THE PARTY OR ARE NOT CONSIDERED TO HAVE AN IMAGE OF  
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LEADERSHIP) AND AN IMPORTANT BASE -- SARRE HEADS THE POSTAL WORKERS' UNION IN PARIS.

4. THE FOUNDATION OF SAND: IF SARRE WAS THUS AN IMPRESSIVE CANDIDATE FROM THE CERES RANK-AND-FILE POINT OF VIEW, HIS CANDIDACY IS AN ANATHEMA TO THE PS MAJORITY, BOTH IN PARIS AND AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, AND TO THE PCF. HE SUFFERS FROM SEVERAL HANDICAPS:

- THE MITTERRANDISTS WITHIN THE PARIS FEDERATION ARE VISIBLY RELUCTANT TO SUPPORT HIM AND ARE PUBLICLY SAYING THAT HIS CANDIDACY WAS RAMMED THROUGH THE FEDERATION WITH NO RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE 40 PERCENT MITTERRANDISTS (RIGHTS WHICH ARE IN THEORY PROTECTED BY THE PRINCIPLE OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION ENSHRINED IN THE PS' INTERNAL STATUTES);
- THE PCF BELIEVES THAT THE SARRE CANDIDACY PROVIDES A CONVENIENT MASK BEHIND WHICH THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE PS CAN HIDE ITS LACK OF WILL TO FORM UNION LISTS OF CANDIDATES IN PARIS;
- EVEN SOME MEMBERS OF THE CERES (INCLUDING A FEW OF ITS NATIONAL LEADERS) ARE FINDING SARRE'S CANDIDACY A DIFFICULT PROBLEM. CERES WOULD LIKE TO COME BACK INTO DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE PS AND IS WILLING TO MAKE CERTAIN SACRIFICES TO THAT GOAL. CERES HEAD JEAN-PIERRE CHEVENEMENT HAS BEEN AT PAINS TO ALIGN HIS MOST RECENT DEFENSE PAPER ON THE MAJORITY'S POINT OF VIEW; CERES LEADER PIERRE GUIDONI HAS BECOME THE MAJORITY'S NUMBER TWO SPECIALIST ON IBERIAN AFFAIRS. IN SHORT, SOME TOP CERES LEADERS ARE HOPING TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF RESPONSIBILITY WHICH WILL BRING THE CERES BACK INTO THE FOLD. SARRE'S

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CANDIDACY DOES NOTHING TO ADVANCE THAT PROCESS.

5. SARRE, THE NATIONAL PS LEADERSHIP AND THE UNITED LEFT: IF SARRE HAS, MORE OR LESS SUCCESSFULLY, ALIENATED A LARGE PART OF HIS POTENTIAL SUPPORT, THE REAL DRAMA OF HIS CANDIDACY IS YET TO COME. WITH SARRE'S UNILATERAL ANNOUNCEMENT HANGING, IN THE WORDS OF ONE

PCF DEPUTY, "LIKE A DAMOCLEAN SWORD OVER THE THREAD WHICH HOLDS TOGETHER, THE UNION OF THE LEFT," NEITHER PS NOR PCF HAS ANY IMMEDIATE HOPE OF PUTTING TOGETHER A SET OF UNION LISTS IN PARIS' 18 SECTORS. CURRENTLY SQUABBLING OVER SUCH ISSUES AS WHICH PARTY WILL LEAD LISTS IN THE FIVE SECTORS CURRENTLY HELD BY THE LEFT (THE PCF), IN FOUR OTHERS IN WHICH THE LEFT CONSIDERS ITSELF TO HAVE A FAIR CHANCE OF WINNING AND IN THE NINE WHERE THE LEFT HAS NO CHANCE AT ALL, PS AND PCF HAVE NOT YET CONFRONTED THE PROBLEM OF THE MAYORALTY CANDIDATES. BOTH NATIONAL FORMATIONS REALIZE THAT SARRE'S DECLARATION LIES ATHWART ANY SERIOUS EFFORT TO INTRODUCE A CANDIDATE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. FOR THE PCF, THE FACT OF A UNILATERAL DECLARATION PRECLUDES THE POSSIBILITY OF ACCEPTING SARRE; FOR THE PS, THE SARRE CANDIDACY MEANS THAT A SURE LOSER, WHO CANNOT BE RENOUNCED WITHOUT HURTING THE PARTY'S IMAGE, HAS PRESENTED THE PARTY WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI.

6. AN OUTSIDER? ONE POSSIBILITY MUCH IN FAVOR AMONG LEADERS OF THE PS MAJORITY -- AND, IF RUMOR CAN BE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 04243

BELIEVED, AMONG SOME PCF LEADERS -- IS THAT THE TWO NATIONAL PARTIES WILL BRING THEIR LOCAL FEDERATIONS TO AGREE ON A SINGLE NON-POLITICAL CANDIDATE. THE IDEA OF A "PERSONALITY" ABOVE POLITICS WHO COULD STAND ABOVE THE FRAY (AND THEREBY REASSURE PARISIANS THAT THE TWO MAJOR LEFT PARTIES CAN PRESENT AN ORDERLY AND UNITED FRONT) HAS GREAT APPEAL TO THE PS. AS TIME GOES BY THE CHANCES OF FINDING SUCH A CANDIDATE APPEAR TO BE DIMINISHING. ALL OF THE MAJOR FIGURES WHO HAVE BEEN HINTED AT AS BEING CAPABLE OF RECEIVING BOTH PS AND PCF APPROVAL APPEAR EITHER TO BE COMMITTED ELSEWHERE OR TO BE RELUCTANT TO UNDERTAKE THE CAMPAIGN, WHICH WOULD IN ANY CASE BE A LATE START ON A LOSING TRACK.

7. MACHIAVELLI LIVES: PERHAPS EVEN MORE INTERESTING IS THE NOTION THAT THE NATIONAL LEVEL OF THE PS IS NOT AT ALL UNHAPPY TO SEE A CERES CANDIDATE BE, AS ONE MAJORITY LEADER PUT IT, "BROKEN ON CHIRAC'S WHEEL."  
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WHERE THE PS IS CONCERNED, AT LEAST PRIVATELY, PARIS CANNOT BE WON BY A LEFT MAYORAL CANDIDATE. GIVEN THAT ASSUMPTION, IT MAY BE USEFUL TO LET THE CERES TAKE THE LOSS, WITH THE ATTENDANT EXPENDITURES OF MONEY, ENERGY AND POLITICAL CAPITAL. IN FACT, SOME CERES PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO WONDER IF THE SUPPORT BEING GIVEN TO SARRE BY ONE OF MITTERRAND'S OLDEST FRIENDS (PARTY DELEGATE-GENERAL GEORGES DAYAN) IS NOT JUST A DEVICE TO KEEP SARRE WALKING INTO THE MUZZLES OF CHIRAC'S CANNONS. WHILE MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE THIS INTERPRETATION TO BE FAR TOO INGENUOUS, THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT PS MAJORITY LEADERS ARE NOT DISPLEASED BY THE POSSIBILITY THAT, IN LOSING THE ELECTION, CERES MAY BE FORCED TO COME AROUND TO A MORE DOCILE POSITION.

8. CONCLUSION: TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR THE UNITED LEFT. IT HAS SOMETHING ON THE ORDER OF TWO WEEKS TO COME UP WITH UNION LISTS FOR THE MAYORALTY RACE. UNTIL IT DOES SO, THE PROBLEMS OF PS CANDIDACIES WILL CONTINUE TO PREOCCUPY -- AND AMUSE -- THE GOVERNMENT MAJORITY. BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT WILL BE THE REACTIONS OF THOUSANDS OF PS VOTERS WHO WILL LIKELY REFUSE THEIR SUPPORT TO THE FIERY CERES LEADER. ONLY IF THE PS THINKS THAT IT CAN MAKE A REAL RUN FOR THE MAYORALTY WILL SARRE CEASE TO BE ITS CHOICE FOR THE MAYOR'S SEAT (EVEN THOUGH HE'S NO LONGER HEADING UP THE LEFT LIST IN HIS SECTOR). AND THAT CONCLUSION SEEMS VERY IMPROBABLE RIGHT NOW.  
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